

undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

February 28, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1. The related notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks Following a Visit With Gulf Coast Grant Recipients in Long Beach, Mississippi *March 1, 2007*

You know, it's interesting to come back down here to the gulf coast. I tried to think back about what it was like the first time I came after the storm hit. And I guess the—my most vivid recollection is the piles of rubble, literally debris stacked upon debris. It was—it's hard to believe then that I would be—I had faith that I'd be able to come to a home, but I had trouble visualizing it. And then I kept coming down, and I watched the improvement, because of the hard work of the local citizens—people like the mayor here and the Governor, who set a vision that was a hopeful vision.

The Federal Government's role has been to write checks. The Governor's role and the mayor's role is help to expedite the Federal money to the local folks. And today we are able to sit in a homeowner—the Woodward's home. Again, one of the things I like to say is, when somebody walks in, "Welcome to my home." And it has a special ring to it here in the gulf coast, because there was a time when their home was totally destroyed.

Part of the reason I've come down is to tell the people here in the gulf coast that we still think about them in Washington, and that we listen to the Governor

when he speaks. The other reason I've come down is I want the taxpayers of the United States to see firsthand what their money has done to help revitalize a series of communities that were literally wiped out because of a major storm.

It's a—this is a hopeful day. There's obviously a lot more work to be done. You can see vacant lots where there's going to be new building. There's still work to be done here in Mississippi, and the Governor and I are going to go listen to some of the local officials describe to me what's on their mind and how we can continue to help. But times are changing for the better, and people's lives are improving, and there is hope. And I congratulate the good folks in this part of the country for their resiliency, their courage, and the fact that they never abandoned hope.

So thank you for giving us a chance to come by. We're proud to be with you. Love being with you. Thank you all for your hospitality. Appreciate it. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. at the home of Cheryl and Ernie Woodward. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor William Skellie, Jr., of Long Beach, MS; and Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in Biloxi, Mississippi

March 1, 2007

Governor and first lady, thanks for your welcome. It's great to be back in the gulf coast of Mississippi.

I've had the privilege of coming down and meeting a lot of these folks before, so I really feel like it's, in many ways, a chance to reconnect with people who I admire. I can remember the looks on your faces when I first came down here during the incredible destruction—right after the destruction of Katrina. You know, there was something about the spirit of Mississippi, though, that made it clear to me that there was no doubt that progress was going to be made.

Mayor, I remember you and I walking through the streets of Biloxi and finding people that were literally stunned and were in shock and were wondering what life meant for them. And I remember the piles of debris, Mayor, in your city. Or, Rocky, I remember talking to you when you came, and you had the same set of clothes on for the last 4 days. You were trying to recover from a brutal devastation in your county.

And I've come back again because I'm inspired every time I come here to see progress and the spirit alive. In other words, people here said, "We refuse to be held down by the storm; we will overcome it."

The job of the Federal Government has been to help. And I made a pledge early on in the process that I would work with the United States Congress, members of both political parties, to get some healthy checks written. And it's important for the check writers, the taxpayers of the United States, to know that progress is being made with their money and that the people of Mississippi appreciate the fact that the country came to help when they needed help. It's a neighborly thing to do.

And secondly, I fully understand there's still work to be done, that even though progress has been made, this storm was so devastating that we have still got to stay focused on the task, and that we've got to work with the Governor and the local officials, the supervisors and the mayors, to continue to help address their needs.

And one of the things I've heard loud and clear is that there's a continued frustration with the slowness of Federal response at times. And therefore, it's important for me to hear that, and my friend Don Powell to hear that, so that we can come and do what the people expect us to do, which is to respond to the needs of people in Mississippi.

I'm very proud of the leadership your Governor has shown. He showed leadership during the storm, he showed leadership in the aftermath of the storm, and he continues to be deeply concerned about the people of Mississippi. And he, along with two fine United States Senators, are constantly talking to the White House in pretty plain language about what more needs to be done. And I hope he would say that we listen, and if possible, respond in a constructive way.

I'm proud to be back again. I intend to keep coming back so long as I'm the President and perhaps after the Presidency, A.J. Now, A.J. has given me a great gift. Instead of the key to the city, he gave me a Biloxi, Mississippi, license plate. It's got my name and my number on there. [Laughter] One of these days, I'll own a private vehicle, and I may just put this on my vehicle when I come back and see you. [Laughter]

Anyway, thank you all very much. Appreciate you.